containment" (pp. 7, 11). The author regards the cultural expressions related to these conceptions as part of the demimonde and its "subculture of resistance" (p. 12). This broad conception of the demimonde allows Gralla to include in her study everything from Nagai Kafū's nostalgic *Tamanoi* to the prostitutes working so vividly in burnt-out ruins of Tokyo in Tamura's *The Gate of Flesh*, and the closed world of a rundown geisha house in Kōda Aya's *Nagareru*. Other Japanese works that Gralla brings into the category of demimonde include Tanizaki's *Naomi*, Murakami Ryū's *Almost Transparent Blue*, and his film *Topāzu*. At points, she comments on the tension between performances and imagination of the demimonde and the Japanese empire's odious practice of "comfort women."

Gralla proves herself a careful and astute reader and critic of works in a range of media. To her credit, she includes a significant comparative component by reading Japanese novels against European, American, Middle Eastern, and Chinese literary works. The author also delves extensively into critical and theoretical stances on the demimonde, eroticism, taboo and transgression, trauma (national and personal), nostalgia, the city, and the figure of the *flaneur*.

One of the most interesting and original chapters is "Dancing the Interior Demimonde," which offers analysis of writer and controversial cultural figure Mishima Yukio (and photographs of him by Hosoe Eikoh), and an especially intriguing reading of *butoh* performer Ohno Kazuo as "demimondaine" (pp. 211–32). In her commentary on Ohno's renowned work "Admiring La Argentina," the author clarifies her broad use of the concept of the demimonde in terms of space, gender, and art, noting that Ohno "dragged behind him, in his lace train, a theatrical space filled with the essence of multiple artistic and erotic subcultures" (p. 229). Also compelling are her reading of Murakami Ryū's controversial novel *Almost Transparent Blue* (1976), in which drugs "facilitate the creation of a personal demimonde of heightened physicality and imagination" (p. 171), and her careful analysis of space and interiority in Kōda Aya's novel *Nagareru* (1955).

While much of Gralla's literary and cultural analysis is thought provoking and thorough, some of the chapters suffer from repetition and would have benefited from an editor's firm hand. One also wishes for greater engagement with the work of Japanese scholars and theorists, beyond the easily accessible and translated work of premier critics such as Isoda Kōichi and Maeda Ai.

The Demimonde in Japanese Literature will be of interest to students and scholars of comparative literature and Japanese studies.

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Bonds of the Dead: Temples, Burial, and the Transformation of Contemporary Japanese Buddhism. By Mark Rowe. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011. xv, 258 pp. $91.00 (cloth); $29.00 (paper).
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Mark Rowe has provided us with a rich and insightful critical inquiry into one of the most common assumptions about contemporary Japanese Buddhism, namely, that it is a

"funerary religion" and that this fact is inextricably tied to its long-standing decline. His innovative analysis of recent to current developments is based upon almost a decade of fieldwork and study pertaining to innovations in Buddhist and non-Buddhist funerary "technology." He focuses on the "Eternal Memorial Grave," an innovative form of Buddhist grave that is accessible to individuals independent of their family and parishioner status, but he also addresses other alternatives to traditional funerals, such as the scattering of ashes and its main supporter, the "Grave-Free Promotion Society" (the object of a recent study by Satsuki Kawano), thus providing for valuable contextualization. Notably, his analysis also takes account of a broad range of materials, from interviews to pamphlets and academic reports.[5]

Rowe's analysis does not completely reverse the received view of Buddhism as a funerary religion. But throughout the book he convincingly presents Japanese Buddhism as a religion that is alive and currently struggling to renew itself, not least through the reinvention and renegotiation of its link to mortuary ritual. Although the ultimate success of this renovatory process cannot be predicted—and Rowe is very careful not to overstep the line from analysis to prophesy—he gives ample evidence that there is a willingness by Buddhist experts, from academic centers to local temples, to face the problems at hand and to come up with novel doctrinal and practical solutions. And these solutions are welcomed beyond the limits of those excluded from the benefits of traditional ancestor worship. In fact, Rowe also does much to shed light on the genealogy of the perceived contradiction between lofty doctrine and pedestrian popular custom, and to question this core tenet of the concept of "funerary Buddhism"—although this is one point deserving of further attention and analysis. His presentation of two sides of Buddhist institutions (local temples and academic centers) alongside with the perspectives of those making use of the innovative funerary solutions also provides rich material for reflection on the concomitant dichotomy between the "purely religious" and the "economical" side of Buddhist institutions.

This work consists of a vivid exposition of the problem, as well as the research objectives and methods, organized into an introduction and six main chapters. They elaborate on the history and interpretation of "funerary Buddhism" in Japan (chapter 1) and contemporary graves and the incentives and ideas behind innovative funeral technologies such as the Buddhist Eternal Memorial Grave (chapter 2). The book also features case studies of one rural Nichiren temple (chapter 3) and one metropolitan Rinzai Zen temple (chapter 4) that offer Eternal Memorial Graves in addition to the traditional parishioner grave, and discusses a nondenominational alternative initiative to replace graves with the scattering of ashes (chapter 5) and the role of Buddhist "sectarian" (Rowe's terminology) academic centers (chapter 6). The short conclusion presents something like a management summary of the study and its results. This section is highly recommended for the hurried reader but largely redundant for those who have read their way through the volume so far—which is made easy by Rowe's clear and multifaceted presentation of perspectives on a problem that is, after all, facing us all in one way or another.

On the whole, I was convinced by Rowe's argument that mortuary practices are an essential domain for investigations into the state of contemporary Japanese Buddhism, and that the innovations that were the main object of his study show the potential for a remodeling of the relationship between Buddhist temples and the laity. He presents ample material that elucidates not only the fact that Japanese Buddhism is "alive" and

[5]Satsuki Kawano, *Nature's Embrace: Japan's Aging Urbanites And New Death Rites* (Honolulu: University of Hawaìi Press, 2010).

not necessarily dying, but also the mode of how it is "lived" in multiple negotiations of doctrine, custom, spirituality, and economy. I also fully subscribe to the programmatic connection he draws between doctrinal and ethnographical study (pp. 7–10). And I was particularly impressed by the both sympathetic and circumspect way in which Rowe presents this material—such as when he complements his report of the fact that the priest who invented the Eternal Memorial Grave at Tōchōji (the Tokyo Rinzai temple) wanted the money for a renovation of his temple to come from "religious activities" with a footnote that money so generated would then be exempt from tax (p. 125, n. 22), and on the next page reports how the involvement of a private company in the running of this temple's Eternal Memorial Grave has led one member of staff to "consider taking the tonsure" (p. 126)—thus showing in detail how the commercial-economical and spiritual elements may interact in various, and not necessarily conflicting, ways.

Rowe touches an important point of the "grave problem" and the "grave-free solution" when he mentions the importance of the presence of physical objects immediately connected to the deceased (not necessarily bodily remains, p. 119) to the functioning of a memorial site (p. 172). And he demonstrates a subtle but important shift in Japanese perceptions of the dead, away from the idea of pacification and moving towards images of the dead being assured of a peaceful resting place (pp. 118–19). This seems to contrast with another shift in the perception of cremated remains, namely that in distinction to earlier periods, cremation seems no longer to function as a way to purify the remains and to draw a secure line between the dead and the living—a fact Rowe reflects upon (pp. 176–77), but does not put in historical perspective.

Two limitations in terms of the scope of his argument stem from his double focus on innovation and on Buddhism as a religion: we do not learn much about the motivation of the (dwindling?) majority that holds on, however tenaciously, to the traditional form of the temple parishioner's family grave (but there is a telling section on "parishioner reaction" to Tōchōji's Eternal Memorial Grave in chapter 4, pp. 132–36), and we learn next to nothing about the perspective of what is, in Rowe's own analysis, the biggest player in the field, that is, the "funeral industry" (pp. 37–38). To request such additional inquiries may be asking too much of an already rich and plural-perspective study. But Rowe's insistence on the significance of the innovations in Buddhist funeral technology he describes would surely have warranted a more explicit reflection on the effects of their exclusion. In terms of methodology, I think this study would have further profited from a more stringent adherence to questions of status and other this-worldly benefits connected with funerals that Rowe exposes in his historical review of "funerary Buddhism," especially in the subsection on Meiji funeral procession (pp. 32–35). In reading this passage, I was half expecting him to draw a connection to Bourdieu's theory of distinction and symbolical capital, which I think would have provided for a useful matrix for the interpretation of his informants' perspectives. Finally, Rowe opens up a transnational comparative perspective in his introduction that would definitively be worth pursuing, but he never comes back to it in the later course of his analysis. All this is to say that I think Rowe's book deserves to be read and discussed widely by scholars and students of Japanese and comparative religion, and that I hope to see it followed up by complementary studies.

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